

Sustainable Energy Committee - Minutes

Conference Room G - Town Hall

Friday, March 4, 2011

7:45 am – 9:10 am

Committee Members Present:

Suzy Littlefield, Chair
Richard Joyce
Christopher Ketchen
Scott Bender
Robert Cooper
Beth DeSombre
Ellen Korpi
Molly Fairchild, Sustainable Energy Coordinator

Meeting called to order at 7:45 am

Citizen Speak: No one present.

Minutes: postponed

Business:

Stretch Energy Code

Ms Littlefield reported on the process of preparing for presenting the Stretch Energy Code to Annual Town Meeting. The Report is ready for the Advisory Book. The presentation will take about 5 minutes. All committee members will need to sign the Report and Article to present to the Moderator before presentation of the article at Town Meeting.

Ms Fairchild reported that the summary emissions data for the Town will be provided to the TM members as a supplementary handout to place the Stretch Energy Code in the Context of how the Town is doing in reaching the goal of reducing emissions 10% below 2007 levels by 2013. It is not required, but will be helpful in building consensus for the stretch Code and updating TM members on the Emissions Reduction Goal that was approved by 2009TM. It may be helpful to have one slide in the presentation on the summary data on Town-wide emissions from 2007-2010.

Paperless Utility Bills

Mr Joyce reported on the launch of paperless Utility Bills at the end of January. The new bill format was also launched at this time, so bills now include the monthly kwh's used for the past 13 months for easy comparison of usage. Mr Cooper acknowledged that he missed the visual message of the bar graph, and that the bars also were average use per kwh/day, which is the optimal and most accurate comparison. Mr Joyce reported that that new format has been very well received, with a lot of positive feedback.

Ms Fairchild reported on the preliminary data for electric and Natural gas usage from 2007 to 2010. Electric usage has continued to climb annually for the residential sector, primarily do the increase in the use of A/C during the summer months. Both Municipal and commercial sectors have decreased during

the same period. Natural gas use has climbed only slightly although the number of accounts for both residential and commercial have increased significantly. The residential conversion from Fuel oil to natural gas has been steady. The jump in the number of commercial natural gas accounts is in part due to the changes in Linden Square. The natural gas usage /account decrease for both residential and commercial – reflecting the better insulation of newer buildings and more efficient furnaces. In addition the increase in Natural gas accounts indicates a comparable reduction in the use of fuel oil. This will also help our emissions, as the cleaner fuel.

Mr Cooper noted that the number of commercial natural gas accounts appears to be somewhat higher than the number of electric accounts. Ms Fairchild indicated that she will look into this difference.

Community Outreach:

Appliance Rebate Program

Mr Joyce reported that the appliance rebate program pays out \$40,000-\$50,000 per year, and questioned whether this is the most effective use of Funds to encourage energy efficiency.

Ms DeSombre offered that the rebate program is the entre for people who are not yet thinking about energy. The first engagement in energy efficiency may be purchasing the energy star appliance.

WMS Fuels

Ms Littlefield commented that the WMS continues to have a dual-fuel system, that has been using mostly fuel oil because it has been the cheaper fuel, based on the contracts we have been able to make. And other barriers like the cost of removing the oil tank at WMS, disposal and clean up that would be required if fuel oil was no longer used.

Mr Joyce suggested that because WMS is also an emergency shelter for the Town – could we keep the dual fuel system for emergency case. Talk to fire chief

Residential Outreach

Mr Joyce reported that the 7% increase in residential electric is due to the increased use of a/c in summer – downward trend in winter months

Ellen – A/C is the challenge. Develop program to encourage full house and attic fans, to encourage Life-style change from beginning of season for AC.

Efficiency of ac (Mr Cooper indicated that the ROI is terrible on purchasing a more efficient AC, a more effective method of reducing energy use for summer cooling is simply Raising thermostat a few degrees would be more effective.

Mr Joyce reported that it is the 3rd day of a heatwave, when electric use dramatically increases, with our peak demand reaches 65.6 megawatts. A large part of this comes from the Commercial sector - a lot from Wellesley College 1.3 megawatts above what they produce from cogeneration. Previously, the

MLP tried to reduce the peak demand from air-conditioning with a demand response program – where large users would agree to reduce their electric use for 4-hour periods - Sunlife refused for computer reasons. 3 town departments, that were involved in the Demand Response program dropped out – so discontinued.

Mr Joyce suggested making the connection with online billing and we could do a direct mailing, as \$23,000-\$25,000 remains in MLP's Sustainable Energy Fund for the spring.

Ms Korpi offered to lead the Summer Cooling Task Force.

Ms DeSombre offered to provide information from the literature on what kind of messages change behavior and to identify others who would be interested in helping from the colleges. Ms DeSombre suggested that first we prepare publicity about successes and secondly develop an a/c sub-committee to address how we tackle this problem.

Mr Joyce stated that one of our successes is the Voluntary Renewable Energy Program (VREP). We should start with the next push for the Voluntary Renewable Program (4500 postage – 8500 \$ for mailing), following the concept that success breeds success. Allan Nogee from the Union of Concerned Scientists, who spoke at one the seminars at the library, put on by the GRSC, informed us that Wellesley is in the top 10% of municipal light plant communities for voluntary renewable participation. About 30 new residents have signed up for the VREP since the January mailing.

Mr Joyce added that the MLP will, for the second year, provide a 2.5 cents rebate for all VREP customers, so the premium for Renewable Energy was \$0.025/kwh not the original charge of \$0.05.

Mr Bender will continue to work on the Sustainable Wellesley website, and outreach to promote VREP GreenScene newsletter from before – Townsman article

Ms Littlefield suggested that we talk to Laura Hockett, who worked on Committee 21 -public school advocacy, and would have advice on how to mobilize volunteers.

Mr Cooper will continue to work Hardware stores on CFLs and the state mandated energy efficiency standards for light bulbs. He will meet with Tom Green on Tuesday.

The Colleges' Update

Ms DeSombre reported that Babson College will be having an all day event - Entrepreneurship for a Sustainable Future – March 31st.

Ms DeSombre also described the 3-College (Wellesley, Babson and Olin) Certificate Program in Sustainability that will bring together the science, marketing and engineering perspectives from the three colleges. Students will be required to choose from courses on all three campuses and all three areas of focus. This will be relevant for the SEC as in the final semester the students will work together on a project-based course (which will start spring semester of 2013) different teams of students would tackle for town or client. This would mean the SEC should consider projects that would be useful to the

Town's Sustainability initiatives, to plan during fall 2012. The SEC could sponsor one project each year. Ms Fairchild suggested that the bus Kiosks could be a possible project for the students, if bus transportation is developed in the Town in the next few years. The entire Committee expressed enthusiasm for developing this sort of collaboration with the Colleges.

Ms DeSombre reported that Sunbug Solar's arrangement with WC to provide a discount to anyone affiliated with the college is getting good participation.

Transportation

Mr Ketchen reported that we will not need to go to TM on transportation, because the project that is being considered does not require an appropriation or by-law change. As soon as the transportation surveys are completed, the report will be completed and given to the Selectmen for consideration.

Green Schools Update

Ms Littlefield reported that a Green Classrooms Checklist has been developed for WMS – a first level of green certification, or Bronze Level. The Schools also are developing a Policy for lights off, for personal appliances in school buildings such as refrigerators, and a policy for energy efficient use of Technology.

Other Updates:

Mr Bender announced that the Cub scouts will help out WHS Green Team at the Sprague SEED- fest (Sprague Environment and Energy Defenders), which is open to the whole town on May 1st – Saturday.

Ms Korpi reported that 75% of programmable thermostats are not programmed, and wondered if this could be a project for students. Ms Littlefield indicated that WHS students would have to have supervision.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:10am.